

ON AN INSULAR FORM OF *MELITHREPTUS*
BREVIROSTRIS, Vigors AND HORSFIELD.

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Melithreptus magnirostris, sp. nov.

(Plate v., figs. 1-2.)

Being at present engaged on the *Meliphagidæ* for the next part of "Nests and Eggs of Birds found breeding in Australia and Tasmania," among other species, Mr. A. Zietz, the Assistant Director of the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, has kindly drawn my attention to three skins of which he writes—"You will notice three specimens of *Melithreptus brevirostris* with remarkably strong bills; the birds were shot on the 3rd October, 1901, by my son Mr. F. R. Zietz out of a flock at Eastern Cove, Kangaroo Island. This might be an insular form of the mainland species."

On the head and nape these specimens, two adult males, and an adult female, more closely resemble New South Wales examples of *Melithreptus brevirostris*, the forehead and crown being of a lighter brown, and the dull buffy-white and blackish-brown bands on the nape being but slightly indicated in comparison with South Australian specimens; they resemble the latter in having a dull white loreal streak but which is even more pronounced; the cheeks and sides of the throat of an adult male are dull white, which passes into a very faint creamy buff on the remainder of the under surface, darker on the centre of the breast and abdomen, the centre of the throat and the fore-neck having a greyish tinge, the flanks slightly washed with brown. The bills of all three specimens are distinctly larger than in continental examples. The adult male previously referred to measures—total length 5·3 inches, wing 2·75, tail 2·4, tarsus 0·65, exposed portion of bill from base of forehead where the feathers end to tip 0·55, breadth of cutting edge at centre of nostril 0·19, height of bill at centre of nostril 0·19.

Remarks.—The outer secondaries of the type are externally edged with olive, as is also found in some adult New South Wales specimens. The white cheek stripe of the specimen labelled a

female is shorter, the under surface is more distinctly tinged with brown, and the wing measurement is 2·8 inches. There is only a slight indication of the white cheek stripe in the other male. Wing measurement, 2·75 inches. The bill of the type is measured as are the bills of all the specimens in the already quoted Catalogue from the end of the feathers at the base of the forehead to the tip, with a pair of finely-pointed calipers irrespective of any curve of the culmen.

Types.—To be placed in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide.

Co-type.—Australian Museum, Sydney.

Habitat.—Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

These birds with the larger bills constitute a well-defined and apparently constant insular form, which I propose in contradistinction to specifically distinguish under the name of *Melithreptus magnirostris*, the Large-billed Honey-eater.

The figures in the accompanying plate are of the natural size, and are reproduced from a photograph of two bird skins laid side by side. One is of an adult male of *Melithreptus brevirostris*, VIG. and HORSE., from the collection of the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, procured by Dr. A. M. Morgan at Laura, South Australia; the other of the type, an adult male, of *Melithreptus magnirostris*, obtained by Mr. F. R. Zietz on Kangaroo Island.